



State of New Jersey

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
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October 29, 2007

TO: Chief School Administrators
Charter School Lead Persons

FROM: Jay Doolan, Ed.D., Assistant Commissioner
Division of Educational Standards and Programs

SUBJECT: Highly Qualified Teacher Requirements

You received a letter from the department, dated July 30, 2007, which provided key updates on the Highly Qualified Teacher requirements of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) including the end of the use of the New Jersey Highly Objective Uniform State Evaluation (HOUSE) matrix as a means for teachers to gain highly qualified teacher status (with the exception of new special education teachers). Since that date, districts have requested further clarifications regarding some issues addressed in that memo.

To ensure that all school district personnel have an accurate interpretation of these provisions of the law, particularly as they apply to the certification and highly qualified status of teachers, this letter will provide you with further clarification. In particular, this memo will address:

- Licensure and highly qualified teacher requirements for teachers holding the Elementary School Teacher in Grades K-5 certificate teaching in departmentalized grade 5 settings;
- Licensure and highly qualified teacher requirements for teachers holding the Elementary School Teacher in Grades K-5 and Elementary School Teacher with Subject Matter Specialization certificates teaching grades six, seven and eight;
- Licensure and highly qualified teacher requirements for teachers holding the Teacher of Students with Disabilities certificate; and
- Issues related to K-8/P-8 school organizational structures as impacted by licensure and highly qualified teacher requirements.

As district administrators review staff qualifications for meeting the highly qualified requirements, it is important to remember that all staff members must:

- Be certified to teach in their assigned teaching positions; AND,
- Demonstrate and document that they are highly qualified for that assignment.

All teachers teaching in core content areas must fill out the highly qualified teacher paperwork even if the certification requirements align with the federal highly qualified teacher requirements.

Requirements for Teachers Holding the Elementary School Teacher for Grades K-5 Certificate and Teaching in Grade 5 Departmentalized School Settings

Teachers who hold the Elementary School Teacher in Grades K-5 certificate may teach in a departmentalized grade five setting by meeting one of the following federal criteria for being highly qualified to teach in middle school:

- Pass the Praxis II Middle School Content Test for each core academic content area the teacher teaches; or
- Have an undergraduate major in the core academic content area(s) they teach; or
- Have 30 credits equivalent to a major (at least 12 credits at the upper division level) in the core academic content area(s) they teach; or
- Have a graduate degree in the core academic content area(s) they teach; or
- Hold National Board certification in the core academic content area(s) they teach.

These teachers do not need to get the Elementary School with Subject Matter Specialization certificate in the content area unless they plan to teach grades six, seven or eight.

Requirements for Teachers Holding the Elementary School Teacher in Grades K-5 Certificate and Teaching in the Middle School

In order for teachers who hold only the Elementary School Teacher in Grades K-5 certificate to teach in grades six, seven or eight, they must also hold the Elementary School Teacher with Subject Matter Specialization in the content area(s) in which they will teach. A teacher holding the Elementary School Teacher in Grades K-5 certificate must meet the following requirements to apply for the Elementary School Teacher with Subject Matter Specialization certificate:

- Pass the Praxis II Middle School Content Test in each core academic content area the teacher teaches; and
- Have 15 credits in the content; and
- Pass a course in Adolescent Psychology at a regionally accredited, four-year college or university.

Requirements for Teachers Holding the Teacher of Students with Disabilities Certificate

Teachers who hold the Teacher of Students with Disabilities certificate may only provide direct instruction in the areas of their instructional certificate or certificates. It is important for school administrators to review special education teachers' instructional certification in determining teacher assignments to assure that they have the appropriate instructional certification to teach at the school level and in the content areas for the classes they are assigned.

Teachers who hold the Teacher of Students with Disabilities certificate may provide inclusion and support services at all grade levels and in all content areas without meeting further highly qualified teacher requirements.

K-8 or P-8 School Organizational Structure

In January 2004, the Department of Education aligned the licensing code to the Highly Qualified Teacher requirement to assure that all new teachers would meet the teacher content knowledge requirements specified in the highly qualified teacher provisions of No Child Left Behind (NCLB). At that time new middle school certificates and special education certificates were created to support new teachers in meeting the federal highly qualified teacher requirements. The new certificates – Elementary School Teacher in Grades K-5, Elementary School Teacher with Subject Matter Specialization, and Teacher of Students with Disabilities – are prescriptive in identifying what the teacher is certified to teach. Teachers who hold the Elementary School Teacher (N-8) or those that hold the Teacher of the Handicapped certificate are grandfathered and may continue to teach the grade levels appropriate to their certificate as long as they can demonstrate they are highly qualified.

If a district decides upon a K-8 organizational structure, it will be important to take into account the prescriptive nature of the new certificates. In order for a teacher holding one of the new certificates to teach in a self-contained middle school classroom, that teacher would need to hold four Elementary School Teacher with Subject Matter Specialization certificates (Language Arts Literacy, Math, Social Studies, and Science). While teachers holding the N-8 elementary certificate have been grandfathered, all new teachers will be required to hold the new K-5 or the Elementary School Teacher Certificate with Specialization as instructional licenses.

Please disseminate this information to all administrative staff and teachers who are required to meet the highly qualified teacher requirements. We appreciate your efforts to ensure that all teachers are highly qualified for their teaching assignments. If you have any questions, please contact Carol Albritton, teacher quality coordinator, at 609-777-4482.

JD/CP/RH/EAS/CA/ S:\Alfie\Highly Qualified Teacher Project\Memo to CSAs re Key Updates-2007.doc

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